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Ministry of Forests and Range
Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services

GOVERNMENT ASKS AUDITOR GENERAL TO REVIEW FOREST SAFETY

VICTORIA – Forests and Range Minister Rich Coleman and Labour and Citizens' Services Minister Olga Ilich have asked the Office of the Auditor General to examine the effectiveness of recent government efforts to improve the safety of forest workers.

"We are committed to ensuring our forest workers get home safely at the end of the day," said Coleman. "We asked for this review so we could have an independent look at the progress we've made on safety issues, and to see if there are any gaps in the regulatory or policy framework that need to be filled to enhance forest worker safety."

"Forest workers operate in complex and often hazardous work environments," said Ilich. "And when something goes wrong, the consequences can be tragic. Everyone will benefit from having an independent review of how the different agencies involved in forest safety can better work together."

The Office of the Auditor General will report on the progress made in implementing the recommendations of the January 2004 Final Report of the Forest Safety Task Force. The review will identify barriers to achieving the task force's goal of zero fatalities, and will also consider whether additional actions are required.

The audit will review the activities of public agencies involved in forestry and safety, including the Ministry of Forests and Range, Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services, WorkSafeBC, Ministry of Transportation and ICBC. It will review mechanisms related to inspections, training and qualification, and insurance.

A report is to be made available to the public and the Members of the Legislative Assembly in June 2007.

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Media contact:
Jennifer McLarty
Public Affairs Officer
250 387-4592

Barb Wright
Communications Director
Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services
250 387-2699

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